To ensure quality service, Providian records every sales call. It has empowered its customer representatives to resolve complaints on the first call. It has put in place new systems to help customers protect their credit records with last-minute payments by phone and the Internet. With initiatives like these, Providian has made service its hallmark.

Remarkably, Providian has implemented these changes and recorded a steep drop in complaints at the same time it has dramatically increased the number of customers it serves.

I hope my colleagues in the House, and all Americans, will join me in saluting Providian for a job well done. I hope that all of corporate America will look at their example of being a good corporate citizen.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BILL PASCRELL, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 25, 2001

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, due to an error on my part, on May 23 I erroneously voted in the affirmative for the Cox amendment to H.R. 1, rollcall No. 143.

My intention was to have voted in the negative for the Cox amendment to H.R. 1, rollcall No. 143.

DETROIT'S 300TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. JOE KNOLLENBERG

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 25, 2001

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the city of Detroit and its residents on the 300th anniversary of the city's founding. As the oldest city in the Midwest, Detroit is the place where Henry Ford made the automobile affordable for all people through the implementation and perfection of mass production. I want to thank Congresswoman CAROLYN KILPATRICK for introducing H. Con. Res. 80.

The city of Detroit also provided assistance for more than 40,000 individuals eagerly awaiting freedom as a stop on the Underground Railroad. Additionally, the city of Detroit has been coined the ''Arsenal of Democracy'', as Motor City residents bravely gave their services to our nation, contributing tremendously to the United States' victory in World War II.

With this year marking the 300th anniversary of Detroit's founding, it has grown into the tenth most populous city in the United States. Detroit has put the world on wheels, and exerts global influence in automobile manufacturing and trade. Furthermore, Detroit is an academic and cultural epicenter, and also exhibits a rich sports tradition. Many musical greats call Detroit home, and it was in this great city where the Motown Sound was born.

I wish to extend to each resident my hearty congratulations on Detroit's 300th anniversary. Their dedication and hard work makes Detroit a city to be commended on its important contributions to the economic, social, and cultural aspects of the United States.

ANOTHER MINNESOTA MEDICAL TECHNOLOGY SUCCESS STORY

HON. JIM RAMSTAD

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 25, 2001

Mr. RAMSTAD. Mr. Speaker, the front page of the Wall Street Journal yesterday announced the Food and Drug Administration's approval of a break-through medical device produced by St. Jude Medical, and company located in my home state of Minnesota.

St. Jude is part of Minnesota's Medical Alley, made up of 300 medical technology companies in the Twin Cities area, which has led the innovation explosion in health care. Increasingly, new medical devices are saving lives, improving the quality of life and reducing health care costs for Americans.

Congress can be proud of its work over the past several years to reform the FDA so Americans can get access to life-saving medical technologies. However, much more remains to be done, including reforming the way Medicare reimburses seniors for these health care technologies.

As co-chair of the House Medical Technology Caucus and a member of the Ways and Means Health Subcommittee, I encourage my colleagues to join me in promoting reforms that will make technologies like St. Jude's ''sutureless'' heart surgery device available to seniors and the other Americans who desperately need them.

[From the Wall Street Journal, May 24, 2001]

NEW TOOLS MAY MAKE HEART-BYPASS SURGERY QUICKER AND LESS RISKY

(By Ron Winslow)

BERNE, SWITZERLAND.—As Thierry Carrel stands over his patient in operating room No. 1 at University Hospital here, he may be poised at the threshold of a new era in heart surgery.

For more than three decades, surgeons have used needle and thread to sew new blood vessels into patients during coronary-bypass operations, which are typically performed through a massive incision in the chest. The vessels are used to reroute blood around blockages in the arteries that feed the heart. And the procedure's success hinges largely on the surgeon's skill at stitching them into place.

But at the moment, Dr. Carrel isn't using his sewing talents. Instead, he takes a device loaded with a vein, inserts it into a small hole he has just cut in the patient's aorta and pushes a button. Click. The device, which resembles a long-handled screwdriver, releases a tiny web of wires that unfolds to form a star-shaped rivet. In less than 10 seconds, Dr. Carrel has attached the vein to the aorta mechanically. That compares with the three to five minutes it might have taken him to make the same attachment with stitches.

FOREIGN DEBUT

Dr. Carrel is one of a handful of surgeons in Europe and Canada who have used the device during the past several months on a total of about 1,000 patients. St. Jude Medical Inc., the U.S. company that makes the product, rolled it out quietly in Europe last fall, but has largely kept it under wraps. Now, that is about to change.

Today, St. Jude plans to announce that the Food and Drug Administration has approved the device for use in the U.S. That makes the St. Paul, Minn., company the early front-runner in an emerging race to equip doctors to perform ''sutureless'' bypass surgery. If surgeons embrace the new technology, it could transform the procedure by triggering wider use of techniques designed to make the operation easier on the patient and reduce the incidence of serious side effects.

St. Jude calls its new product the aortic connector. While it is designed to make just one type of the various critical attachments that bypass surgery requires, the company is planning to introduce a full line of connectors over the next year or two, aiming to automate the entire vessel-grafting process. The typical bypass operation involves three or four vessel grafts in which a doctor performs five to seven individual sewing procedures.

NOT GOING TO FLY ANYMORE

As the first to the market, St. Jude faces several hurdles in winning acceptance of its device. Among them: the added cost of using it and the long-term track record of conventional heart surgery, which is impressive enough that many doctors may feel little need to meddle with it. But there also are compelling arguments for heart surgeons to adopt sutureless connectors. Leading the list is the growing push to make bypass surgery—one of medicine's most invasive operations—more patient-friendly.

''For 35 years, we've been doing by-pass surgery the same way and gotten away with it,'' says Hani Shennib, a heart surgeon at McGill University Health Center in Montreal. ''That's not going to fly anymore. Patients really want to have the same outcome as surgery but with procedures that are a lot less invasive.''

The most promising strategy along those lines is beating-heart surgery, in which the surgeon operates on the heart as it continues to pump blood. The goal is to avoid putting the patient on a heart-lung machine, or the ''pump,'' as surgeons call it. Time on the pump, which takes over the heart's function so surgeons can operate on a still organ, has been associated with complications arising from bypasses.

A MOVING TARGET

But the beating-heart technique, which emerged in the mid-1990s, is used in only about 20% of the more than 700,000 bypass surgeries performed world-wide each year. The main reason: the painstaking work of suturing bypass vessels into place—which surgeons call ''the anastomosis''—is much harder to do on a beating heart. Devices that automate the process could make beating-heart surgery much less challenging and potentially more popular.

''The only reason you put a patient on a pump is to accommodate the guy tying the knots,'' says St. Jude's Daniel J. Sullivan, the aortic connector's chief inventor. ''We're the first ones to go after the sewing process as an issue.''

In addition, proponents say, mechanical connectors could make bypass surgery safer by reducing the risk of stroke and other neurological side effects that recent studies have linked to the operation. In February, Duke University researchers reported that 42% of bypass patients suffer such problems as loss of memory, confusion and inability to